

REMARKS

The Applicants thank Examiner Balsis for the courtesies extended to the undersigned during a telephone interview on December 20, 2004. During the interview, the differences between the prior art and the toothbrush recited in the pending claims, as well as potential amendments to the claims, were discussed. It in the interview, it was agreed in principle that the prior art of record does not teach or suggest the subject matter of a toothbrush manufactured from preformed thermoplastic components having different melt flow rates that are welded together. Claim 1 has been amended to include this allowable subject matter.

Claim Rejections

Applicants thank Examiner Balsis for the indication that claims 9 and 10 are allowable.

Claims 1 and 7 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,499,421 to Brice (Brice). Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,242,301 to Hickey et al. (Hickey). Claims 2-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brice in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,682,620 to Gartland et al. Claims 5-8 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brice. Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickey. Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brice in view of European Patent No. EP 0557537 to Bonfiglio (Bonfiglio). Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a toothbrush manufactured from preformed thermoplastic components having different melt flow rates. As discussed in the interview, neither Brice nor Hickey teaches or suggests this subject matter. Brice discloses a twin-headed toothbrush that is formed by ultrasonically welding two brush segments together. (*See e.g., Brice*, col. 11, lines 48-57). However, Brice discloses the use of a single material for the brush segments (*see e.g., Brice*, col. 9, lines 54-60), and does not disclose the use of thermoplastics materials having different melt flow rates. Similarly, Hickey discloses melting and fusing two toothbrush portions to form a single two-headed toothbrush. (*See e.g., Hickey*, col. 5, lines 10-11). However, Hickey does not disclose or suggest the use of thermoplastic materials with different melt flow rates for the two toothbrush portions.

Application No.: 09/992,788
Amendment dated January 4, 2005
Reply to Office Action of October 4, 2004

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over Brice or Hickey. As claims 2-8 depend from claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-8 are allowable along with claim 1, and further in view of novel features recited therein.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully urged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below-listed number.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: January 4, 2005

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